

chief, an old, patriarchal man, awaited his entrance into their midst with his people gathered about him. Mistaking, as was done in the olden time, the mission of the holy father, he wished to lay down his power and chieftainship into his hands. Like this great master, De Smet hastened to announce that the kingdom of which he was an humble ambassador, was not of this world. At the day's ending, 2,000 Indians recited a prayer and chanted a hymn. Within a fortnight the Flatheads had learned their prayers. At the end of two months 600 had been baptized.

After a sojourn among them of some months, and a thorough study of the situation De Smet returned to St. Louis for assistance. The trail led him through tribes of hostile Indians. His garb protected him and enabled him to reach his destination after much hardship.

In the spring of 1841, with two additional priests and three lay brothers, who were also mechanics, Father De Smet returned to his wards. The Bitter Root Valley was now selected as the site of a permanent mission. At a point now known as Stevensville, on the Bitter Root Valley branch of the Northern Pacific railroad, a cross was set up, and on Rosary Sunday, 1841, the Mission of St. Mary's was established.

The various labors of the new mission were now carried forward unceasingly. Not only were the masses held, the catechism taught, the gospel preached, and converts baptized, but a chapel and residence inclosed with a palisade were also built, and agricultural pursuit taught.

The mission, as located, was on the east bank of the Bitter Root River, a short distance below Stevensville, and close to where the wagon bridge crossing the river between Stevensville and the railroad station is now placed. The church was of logs, and was afterward torn down.

Adjoining this spot is old Fort Owen, an adobe stockade built in those early times by a Maj. Owen, partly, at least, so it is said, as a speculation. The expectation was that it would be sold to the government. The ruins of the so-called fort are still there. There are two squares, badly cracked, partly tumbled towers, evidently intended to serve as lookout stations, at the two southern corners. These were loop-holed. The sides of the structure were only one story in height, divided into small rooms, some of which are even now occupied. If there ever was anything beyond an embankment on the north side, it is now gone.

In the summer of 1842, De Smet again returned to St. Louis, and then sailed for Europe. Here he obtained a reinforcement of fathers and lay brothers, and there also returned with him six sisters of the Congregation of Our Lady. Near the close of 1843, they sailed from Antwerp for Fort Vancouver on the Pacific coast, where they arrived in August, 1844.

Among those who accompanied De Smet to this country at this time was Father Ravalli, afterwards famous for his good works as priest and physician. In 1846, the first flouring mill in what is now Montana, was built here by him, the mill stones being packed in on horses.

Father Ravalli also erected here the first saw mill. For this purpose he welded together four wagon tires for the crank, while another tire, after much hammering down and filing, answered as a saw.

Anthony Ravalli was what might have been termed a strange incongruity in this region. Born in 1812, at Ferrara, Italy, he devoted long years to scholarly pursuits and studies. He seems to have imbibed an ardent desire from the first to devote his life to those same Indian missions. To this end he studied medicine, mechanical trades, architec-